

VZCZCXRO8042  
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHRH #0836/01 1751553  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
O 241553Z JUN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1045  
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 000836

NOFORN  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/23/2019  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SA](#) [IR](#) [UAE](#) [UK](#)  
SUBJECT: SAUDIS URGE PUBLIC RESTRAINT ON IRAN

REF: RIYADH 806

Classified By: CDA Ambassador Richard Erdman  
reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

SUMMARY  
-----

¶1. (C) The Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister commended President Obama's "wise policy" on Iran and urged continued restraint to avoid playing into the regime's attempts to cast the opposition as pawns of the West. Ahmadinejad would likely survive but would be severely weakened by this unprecedented "insiders revolt." End summary.

DON'T ABET IRANIAN ATTEMPTS TO DISCREDIT OPPOSITION  
-----

¶2. (C) During an introductory call June 23 by CDA, Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister for Multilateral Affairs Dr. Prince Turki bin Mohammed bin Saud Al-Kabeer commended President Obama's "wise policy" thus far on events unfolding in Iran. Turki strongly emphasized the need for all countries to avoid taking actions that would be seen as meddling and that the Iranian government could exploit to discredit the opposition. "They are desperate to drag you in and brand Mousavi and the others as agents of the US," he warned, "because they want to crush the opposition but need a pretext." Turki worried particularly about the French and the British, who risked being "pinned down in a media war with the Iranian regime."

DON'T ADMIT SUPPORT FOR MOUSAVI  
-----

¶3. (S/NF) Prince Turki said the Saudi government would refrain from public comments about the situation. He wished the UAE would do the same, referring ruefully to statements by UAE FM Abdallah bin Zayid congratulating Ahmadinejad on his victory. Whereas the Saudis "definitely supported Mousavi," Turki declared, they could never admit this. However, he implied that the SAG would support efforts to assist Mousavi and the other members of the opposition, so long as the assistance remained untraceable.

UNPRECEDENTED CRACK IN REVOLUTIONARY FOUNDATION  
-----

¶4. (C) The situation in Iran was unprecedented, Turki observed; it was "a revolt from inside." Khamenei made a "big mistake" in siding with Ahmadinejad; whereas before the Supreme Leader had kept himself above the fray of politics, his support for Ahmadinejad has left him open to attacks by rival clerics such as Rafsanjani and Khatami. This in turn would eventually open the door for those outside the inner circle to join the fight, and ultimately undermine the revolution.

REGIME WILL SURVIVE, FOR NOW

-----  
15. (C) Torki assessed that in the end the Iranian government would be able to put down the current unrest, and that Ahmadinejad would probably stay, but in a considerably weakened position. His longevity would depend on whether he chose to be as "demagogic" on other issues as he has been on the nuclear file. The irony in this crisis was that despite the power struggles, when it came to Iran's nuclear policies, Torki opined that "there were no differences between the politicians." Torki maintained that the crisis had started with Iran's economic problems. Ahmadinejad had mismanaged government spending, wasting millions on overseas adventures while tolerating internal corruption. Ordinary Iranians had "seen no benefits," which explained the depth of anger towards the government. Ahmadinejad deserved "credit" for his role in making Iranian intentions clear, Torki suggested. His arrogance had revealed Iran's true nuclear ambitions and had widened the fissures within the regime, which had now become "fragile." Charge agreed that the regime had been fundamentally altered by the crisis, though it was still too early to predict an outcome.

CONSULT WITH US, PLEASE  
-----

16. (C) The Saudi government was watching closely, and Torki underscored the importance of close consultations and sharing of information to maintain a calibrated international response to the crisis. Charge assured Prince Torki that the USG would continue to stay in close touch on all regional issues, including on Iran.

RIYADH 00000836 002 OF 002

ERDMAN